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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

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THE DEPARTMENT OF  
CHILD AND FAMILY STUDIES

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024  
(revised August 2023)

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College of Education, Health, & Human Sciences

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## Welcome from the Interim Department Head

It is with much anticipation and great pleasure that I welcome you to the Child and Family Studies (CFS) Graduate Program. Some of you are returning while others of you are just getting to know the faculty, course array, and spaces in Jessie Harris Building and across campus. What I most want to convey to all of you is how fortunate we are to have you work alongside the CFS faculty. As a faculty, we are committed to ensuring your educational experiences are fulfilling, challenging, and relevant. To this end, we work to guide you through your program of study, which includes course work, research, and community outreach and engagement.

We have created a cohesive and inclusive community of learners within CFS. This means that there is a strong network of relationships between you and your peers and you and the faculty that serves as the foundation for your experiences. As part of this community, you will be invited to work closely with a faculty member, often in their research labs or in the Early Learning Center for Research and Practice (ELC). Through your graduate assistantships, you will be mentored in research methods, course preparation, and opportunities to develop your own program of research. Once you participate in these endeavors, you will then have multiple opportunities to present your work locally, nationally, and internationally. You will also have the opportunity to co-author manuscripts with faculty and peers.

I encourage you to get to know the faculty and to schedule meetings to introduce yourself and share your goals. I also invite you to attend our departmental colloquia and consider presenting at one before you graduate. Our department is also active in a number of graduate research initiatives that have in the past included poster sessions each spring and travel to one of the three SEC land grant universities with whom we partner (i.e., Auburn University, University of Georgia, and Virginia Tech) to present research. In addition, you will have the opportunity to get to know your peers and actively engage in service as a member of the department graduate student organization (GSO).

We strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with the specifics of graduate work by carefully examining this *CFS Graduate Student Handbook*. It is a valuable source of information about the structure, policies, and program requirements that will shape your course of study. Our faculty and staff are available to answer your questions, but in most cases, you should seek information from your permanent advisor (Major Professor) or the CFS Director of Graduate Studies. And please visit our CFS website and social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) often for updates, highlights, and links to the Online Graduate Catalog, as well as information about financial aid and educational opportunities that you may want to access.

Warmest regards,

Spencer Olmstead, PhD  
Interim Department Head  
and Professor

## INTRODUCTION

To serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, information related to the process of graduate education in each department is to be provided for all graduate students. Based on Best Practices offered by the Council of Graduate Schools, it is important that detailed articulation of the information specific to the graduate degrees offered in each department or program be disseminated.

The Child and Family Studies (CFS) Graduate Student Handbook does not deviate from established [Graduate School Policies](#) in the Graduate Catalog. Rather, it provides the specific ways in which those policies are carried out.

## PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to present the policies and procedures pertaining to graduate study in the Department of Child and Family Studies (CFS). The policies and procedures documented here are specific to the department but are consistent with those of the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences (CEHHS) and the University of Tennessee (UTK). Because this *Graduate Student Handbook* (hereafter referred to as the *Handbook*) is revised regularly, it may contain information that is more current than the *UT Graduate Catalog*.

The *Handbook* contains many important links related to policies and procedures. These may be directly accessed from within this document by clicking on the link.

Graduate students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the university, including all the policies outlined in the Graduate Catalog. The following links provide important and useful information: [Hilltopics Student Handbook](#), [The University of Tennessee Graduate Catalog](#), the [Graduate Student Appeal Procedure](#), and [Fellowships, Assistantships, and Other Funding Sources](#).

This *Handbook* contains information for graduate students and faculty. Required forms are available from the [UT Graduate School](#), the [Office of Graduate and International Admissions](#), or on the [department's website](#).

All issues related to graduate administration are overseen by the departmental Graduate Committee, which is chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies. Graduate program administrative details are overseen by the Graduate Program Administrative Specialist (Mrs. Rachel Heston, 865-974-6382; [rxb289@utk.edu](mailto:rxb289@utk.edu)). All general program-related questions should first be directed to her, and she will forward your message on to the relevant parties should it be needed.

The degree programs that are covered in this *Handbook* include the M.S., Ph.D., and M.S. en route to Ph.D. in Child and Family Studies. Please refer to the *Handbook* for the minimum course requirements and the policies and procedures pertaining to each degree program.

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Graduate students need to keep this *Handbook* readily available; relevant parts can be downloaded from the department's website. As needed, please take paper copies of relevant forms and sections from the *Handbook* to planning meetings you have with your major professor or graduate committee members. Most forms are also available electronically and the Graduate School now accepts electronic signatures.

The *Handbook* reflects a continuing process, and its contents represent long-standing policy as well as regular changes. Recommendations for the *Handbook's* improvement are welcome, and they may be presented to the Director of Graduate Studies.

We hope your graduate studies are successful; this *Handbook* has been compiled to help facilitate that outcome.

## **DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

### **I. Department Mission, Vision, and Core Values Related to Diversity**

#### **A. General Mission.**

The central foundation of graduate programs in CFS is that scientific inquiry provides the most effective means to promote the well-being of children, youth, and families. A cornerstone concept for the department's mission is "development in context" or the perspective that human development is best understood in terms of interconnections among families, neighborhoods, schools, communities, and cultures. A more specific focus within this "development in context" perspective is an emphasis on "the well-being of children, youth, and families." Together, these two foci, "development in context" and "the well-being of children, youth, and families," guide all aspects of decision-making in the department, for example, decisions that affect the structure, content, implementation, and evaluation of CFS graduate programs.

The CFS department vision is to be nationally and internationally recognized for using interdisciplinary approaches to understand and enhance the well-being of children, youth and families in diverse contexts. We collectively aspire to research, teaching, and practice that are scientifically and socially significant. We strive to implement initiatives that foster community engagement, build strengths, and reflect our commitment to inclusivity. The pursuit of the CFS vision is guided by a set of core values that influence programs of study and opportunities to conduct research and engagement with graduate students. These include:

1. A continuous quest for academic achievement through research, teaching, and service by collaborating with diverse faculty, staff, students, families, and communities.
2. The development of future leaders who are culturally competent, represent an array of diverse populations, and are capable of working collaboratively with underrepresented and represented groups in the work force.
3. A commitment to fostering professionals who are dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and promoting the well-being of children, youth, and families by developing and evaluating prevention and intervention services through student and faculty research using university, community, and government resources.
4. The development and support of partnerships with international agencies and institutions of higher education in countries that provide opportunities for student engagement with a global society.
5. The development and maintenance of a departmental culture where professional integrity and responsibility are valued and encouraged.

#### **B. Child and Family Studies Graduate Programs**

1. Philosophy and Program Competencies
  - a. Child and Family Studies is the systematic study of children, youth, and families in contexts such as the home, neighborhood, and school, as well as cultural forces and values in which these contexts are embedded. It is through systematic scientific study



of these contextual features that new knowledge emerges and leads to evidence-based application and evaluation of prevention and intervention efforts that may improve quality of life.

- b. The CFS graduate program prepares professionals to serve the public as researchers, providers, policy makers, and teachers. The curricula in CFS qualify graduates for research and/or teaching positions in colleges, universities, government, and industry. Graduates also serve as professional teachers in Pre-K to 3 public school programs or as service providers in community agencies that serve children, youth, and families and seek to promote their well-being. CFS graduates should have a strong background in human development and family relationships as well as educational theories and practices for those students enrolled in the Pre-K to 3 teacher licensure program. CFS graduates in the teacher licensure program should possess the following competencies:
  - demonstrate basic understanding and knowledge in Child and Family Studies as well as research methodology and professional ethics;
  - assess and evaluate the human development, family science, or early childhood education (ECE) needs and problems of target populations;
  - communicate CFS and ECE information to the public; and
  - function effectively as professionals in the fields of CFS or ECE in educational institutions, service agencies, or industry.
- c. With the M.S. degree, graduates should possess the following competencies:
  - demonstrate advanced knowledge of human development and family science or Early Childhood Education;
  - demonstrate advanced knowledge of research methodology and the interpretation and application of research in CFS or ECE; and
  - assume positions in service agencies, child care, or public schools that prefer to hire individuals who have earned the M.S. degree.
- d. With the Ph.D. degree, graduates should possess the following competencies:
  - demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the science of human development and family science and/or Early Childhood Education;
  - apply comprehensive knowledge and understanding of research methodology and statistics in the fields of human development and family science and/or Early Childhood Education;
  - disseminate new knowledge and application procedures through publications in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, private and government agency reports, and presentations at professional meetings; and
  - assume high level research, teaching, or administrative duties in institutions of higher education and/or in industry, government, or non-government agencies.

## II. General Duties and Responsibilities of Faculty and All Graduate Students

Faculty in the Department of Child and Family Studies are responsible for research, teaching, and service, as described in The University of Tennessee [Faculty Handbook](#) and the Department of Child and Family Studies By-Laws. Faculty members are responsible for research, scholarship, and creative activities that make intellectual contributions within and across disciplines. Faculty members disseminate their research through professional presentations and publications, seek funding for their efforts, and mentor undergraduate and graduate students in research. Teaching responsibilities include designing, implementing, and evaluating courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and advising both undergraduate and graduate students. Teaching can include on-campus instruction and distance learning strategies. More specific responsibilities of graduate student advising are detailed in [Section III, E](#) of this *Handbook*. Faculty service responsibilities include department, college, and university governance and service to their disciplines and the community.

Graduate students are responsible for knowing and following the guidelines and requirements described in this handbook and in the [Graduate Catalog](#). The Department of Child and Family Studies graduate programs have requirements beyond the minimum established by The Graduate School. Students are expected to keep up-to-date on curricular rules and regulations by visiting the [Graduate School](#) website regularly and meeting with their major professor and committee members. Major professors and staff may provide reminders or notifications about deadlines and procedures, but ultimately it is the student's responsibility to meet all deadlines and fulfill all program requirements. Students are responsible for registering for classes, scheduling examinations (e.g., comprehensive exams, thesis/practicum and dissertation defenses), and reporting to the Graduate School. Students should follow these procedures in consultation with their major professor.

A statement of graduate students' rights and responsibilities is printed on the student's admission status form. Additional copies are available from the [Office of Graduate Admissions](#).

Academic integrity, including intellectual integrity, academic honesty, and avoidance of plagiarism is the responsibility of all faculty and students. The [Graduate Catalog](#) and [Hilltopics](#) discuss these issues. Plagiarism is a serious offense, which involves using the work of others without giving appropriate credit or acknowledgement. All members of the academic community are expected to summarize, paraphrase, and quote sources appropriately. University Libraries provide resources on [how to avoid plagiarism](#). Child and Family Studies students are strongly encouraged to review these resources so they can write effectively and confidently, with the knowledge that they have credited their sources correctly. All members of the academic community are responsible for being familiar with and following the code of honesty.

### **Graduate Student Academic and Professional Conduct**

Students are expected to adhere to the University of Tennessee's Standards of Conduct as described in [Hilltopics](#) and behave in accordance with the University of Tennessee's [civility principles](#). Any form of academic dishonesty or violation of the [Honor Statement](#), including

plagiarism and any other form of cheating, is grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

Students are expected to behave in a professional manner with all people, including but not limited to other students, faculty, staff, research participants, and people they have contact with in community agency settings and schools. In particular, students are expected to demonstrate:

- Consideration and respect for all people in spoken and written form (including electronically)
- Willingness and an ability to listen to others and consider feedback
- Respect and appreciation for human diversity (e.g., religious, gender, sexuality, age, disability, social class, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, value system) and refrain from imposing personal beliefs onto others
- Self-awareness of their influence on others and a willingness to examine and change behavior when it is disruptive, disturbing, or causing stress or emotional harm to others

Professional misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Failure to respond to or comply with a University of Tennessee authority
- Failure to attend required meetings called by University of Tennessee administrators or faculty
- Alteration, falsification, or misuse of documents
- Disruption of teaching
- Intimidating, threatening, harassing, or coercing behavior
- Verbal or physical abuse
- Inappropriate relationships
- Inability to sustain or perform satisfactorily in graduate assistantship or practicum placements
- Criminal/illegal activity
- Improper or unauthorized use of University of Tennessee facilities, services, and equipment
- Other behaviors determined as unprofessional toward other students, faculty, staff, administrators, research participants, and people that students have contact with in community agency settings and schools

### III. General Policies

The [University of Tennessee Graduate Catalog](#) contains University of Tennessee, Knoxville, policies that are applicable to all graduate students. Key course enrollment policies are described in [Appendix A](#). Several forms are required by the University and the department to secure approvals and to document progress through your academic program. These forms are available on the CFS [website](#) or through links available in [Appendix B](#). The catalog is revised regularly, and students are responsible for the policies and procedures in this *Handbook*.

The policies outlined in this *Handbook* have been adopted by the Department of Child and Family Studies and are the departmental means for fulfilling the University of Tennessee guidelines and policies until changed by the Department or University. This *Handbook* may include some changes in departmental graduate programs that are not yet in the Graduate Catalog. Therefore, faculty, graduate students, and staff are accountable for the policies and procedures detailed in this *Handbook*.

#### A. Admission - General Procedure for the M.S. and Ph.D. Degrees

University graduate student admission requirements, as well as information regarding special admission categories, such as non-degree, conditional, probationary, or readmission, can be found in the [University of Tennessee Graduate Catalog](#).

Graduate application materials and information can be obtained from the [Office of Graduate Admissions](#), the Department of Child and Family Studies [website](#) for the M.S., M.S. en route to Ph.D., and Ph.D. degrees, or from the Graduate Program Administrative Specialist (Mrs. Rachel Heston, 865-974-6382; [rxb289@utk.edu](mailto:rxb289@utk.edu)).

#### B. Orientation

Information on the University's [graduate student orientation](#) is available on the Graduate School's website. In addition, the CFS Graduate Student Organization (GSO) hosts an orientation for all new graduate students prior to classes beginning each fall semester.

#### C. Thesis or Pre-Doctoral Requirement

Most Ph.D. students enter with a Master's degree. If the student has completed an official thesis as part of their Master's degree, the student's doctoral committee will determine if the thesis meets empirical standards. Although this determination will ultimately be made by the student's committee, the expectation is that the thesis will demonstrate sufficient training in both theory and empirical methods (e.g., IRB approval, data collection and/or analysis if secondary data was used, appropriate analytical approach used correctly). If the student has a non-thesis Master's degree or the student's committee does not believe that the thesis sufficiently demonstrate sufficient rigor, the student will need to complete a [Pre-Doctoral research project](#) before taking the Comprehensive Exam. Students who are admitted to the Ph.D. program without a Master's degree (i.e., M.S. en route to Ph.D.) will complete requirements for the thesis-based M.S. degree as part of their program of study. These students should complete the [Request for Concurrent Master's Degree](#) and submit the form to the CFS Director of Graduate Studies for approval after their thesis has been approved by their committee. This is expected to happen near the end of the second year of a student's program of study and must be completed prior to taking the Comprehensive Exam.

#### **D. Initial Enrollment**

Upon arrival to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, graduate students should report to the Graduate Program Administrative Specialist (Mrs. Rachel Heston, 865-974-6382; [rxb289@utk.edu](mailto:rxb289@utk.edu)) to complete various forms required by the University. All new doctoral and Master's students with a research and application (R&A) concentration will be advised by their assistantship supervisor until they select a major professor (See the CFS [website](#) for a description of faculty research interests). For those students who enter without an assistantship or have an assistantship outside the department, they will be advised by the Director of Graduate studies until they select a major professor.

Before selecting a major professor, it is important that students familiarize themselves with each faculty member in the department to see which faculty would be a good match in terms of research or practicum interests. Once the student identifies a faculty member that could serve as a major professor for their thesis, practicum, or doctoral committee, the student should make an appointment to discuss mutual interests, faculty and student expectations, and overall fit. If there appears to be a good fit, and student and faculty both agree to expectations, the student should then ask if the faculty member would be willing to serve in this capacity. If the faculty member accepts, then the student and faculty member should discuss other potential members of the committee. Once committee members are identified, it is necessary for the student to contact the prospective committee members (preferably by making an appointment), describe their own interests, and then asking the faculty members if they are willing and able to serve. An email or other written confirmation is the appropriate way to document that a faculty member has officially agreed to serve on a committee.

After the committee is formed, the student should do the following:

- a. Submit a "Program Plan for the M.S. with a [Research and Application Concentration](#)" or "Program Plan for the M.S. with a [Teacher Licensure Concentration](#)," or "Program Plan for the [Doctoral Degree](#)" to the major professor, and after approval is given, the student should arrange a meeting of all committee members for review. The plan should be completed and filed during the second semester of full-time study or part-time equivalent; and
- b. To note, for the Program Plan for the Doctoral Degree (but not for the M.S. forms), if the plan is approved by the major professor and committee members, it should be signed by the student and each committee member.
- c. The major professor and student should retain copies for their own files and a copy of the plan should also be given to the Graduate Program Administrative Specialist (Mrs. Rachel Heston, 865-974-6382; [rxb289@utk.edu](mailto:rxb289@utk.edu)) for placement in the student's file. If the plan is not approved, it should be revised and resubmitted.

#### **E. Advising Process**

The advising process involves responsibilities for the advisee (the graduate student) and the advisor (the student's major professor).

1. Responsibilities of the advisee are as follows:
  - a. Contact the major professor to schedule an appointment prior to registration for classes for the subsequent semester;
  - b. Maintain regular communication with the major professor to facilitate timely degree progress;
  - c. Consult the [University registration website](#) for information on procedures and

- deadlines for graduation. This site also has a link to the [Timetable of Classes](#);
- d. Be familiar with the information in [Graduation Information for Graduate Students](#). Students have found this information to be very helpful.
  - e. Notify the Graduate Program Administrative Specialist (Mrs. Rachel Heston, 865-974-6382; [rx289@utk.edu](mailto:rx289@utk.edu)) of any change in address or telephone number.
2. Responsibilities of the major professor are as follows:
- a. Assist the student in developing a plan of study that is commensurate with the student's background, interests, and goals and complies with the approved curricula and policies;
  - b. Provide guidance to the student on selection of committee members;
  - c. Assist the student in meeting Graduate School requirements and deadlines;
  - d. Provide guidance in the development of a research project (or practicum project in the case of the M.S. practicum program) suitable for either a Master's thesis or doctoral dissertation; and
  - e. Coordinate written and oral examinations as required by the specific programs in which the student is a candidate (e.g., comprehensive examination in the doctoral program); oral examination for Master's thesis/practicum or doctoral dissertation and comprehensive examination for teacher licensure or doctoral students.

#### **F. General Requirements for Completion of Degree**

See the current [Graduate Catalog](#), for "Degree Program Requirements."

Master's students who declare for the practicum track must pass a culminating experience (CFS 564 and CFS 565) and prepare and present a written product to their M.S. committee that was developed with the approval of the committee and their on-site agency advisor. The product should address potential benefits to agency providers and/or children, youth, or families.

#### **G. Graduate Student Research**

Research opportunities for graduate students in the department are often linked to departmental faculty research interests. Faculty members' current projects and research interests can be found on their websites [department's website](#) and CVs. Also, specific information on current research may be obtained from individual faculty members.

#### **H. Graduate Student Travel**

As part of thesis and dissertation scholarship, the faculty strongly recommend that students present their research at professional meetings (local, regional, national, and international) to both network and to build a national or international presence. The student should discuss these opportunities with their major professor.

In general, partial funding can be arranged for graduate students who travel to meetings to present research or take part in other educational opportunities (e.g., from the graduate school, the college, and the department). A student should begin the process of requesting funds and completing the necessary paperwork in accordance with the respective specific deadlines to ensure proper reimbursement of expenses, usually several months in advance. Students on official University travel are responsible for adhering to University travel regulations. Travel arrangements should be made in consultation with the major professor. Possible sources to obtain information about funding include: major professor, UT Graduate

Student Senate, Department Head, College Dean, and/or National and International Organizations. Additional information regarding financial assistance for student travel is available from the [College website](#) and the [Graduate Student Senate](#) website.

The following checklist is not extensive but can help make the process flow smoothly:

Action	Time-Frame
Request funding from multiple sources	Prior to listed deadlines
Make travel arrangements and register	Prior to listed deadlines
Complete a Travel Authorization*	At least 2 weeks prior to travel
Complete a Travel Reimbursement Request*	Allow additional time for international travel upon return

**\*Note: UT only accepts ORIGINAL receipts**

## I. Research Projects and Studies with Human Subjects

All research projects or studies that involve the use of human subjects must be reviewed by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) or be certified as exempt from IRB review. All students involved in projects with human subjects should familiarize themselves with the information available from the Office of Research on [working with human subjects](#) and obtain CITI training (<https://irb.utk.edu/training/>). This includes, for example, “The Human Subject Research Review System” and “Students’ Guide for Studies Involving Human Participants.” There also are training modules, including the “Training Module for Protection of Human Subjects” and the “NIH Protection of Human Research Participants (PHRP) Training Guide.” This is necessary because no research with human subjects can be initiated until approval from the IRB is received. Understanding the special nature of the [human subjects research review](#) system is important and required by federal regulations governing research with human subjects. To obtain information of the regulations governing research with human subjects and learn about the specific CFS review procedures, graduate students should work with their major professor and the Departmental Review Chair (DRC) or directly with the UT IRB (<https://irb.utk.edu/>). Major professors and assistantship supervisors will help prepare and guide students through this process.

IRB applications are submitted through iMedris (<https://research.utk.edu/proposal-support/toolkit/research-tools/imedris/imedris-resources/>). Students will submit IRB applications with their faculty supervisors. Please make sure to also list the CFS Department Review Chair (DRC, as #1) and the Department Head (#2) to receive the submission for sign-off. The DRC will forward the application to the CFS IRB review committee, and they will conduct the first stage of review and either reject the application online with requests for revisions or sign off. The sign off will automatically send the application to the Department Head for sign off. Once signed by both, it moves automatically to the UT IRB for review and approval/denial. A student should begin the process of working with their advisor to submit their IRB application well before they plan to begin the research study. The DRC will need at least 10 business days for their review, students will need time to work on any revisions that are requested (to note, nearly all applications require some revisions), and the DRC will again need a reasonable amount of time to review the revised application. Should the application be approved at this point, the Department Head will need time to sign off before it gets submitted to the University IRB. Please plan your submission window accordingly.



## **J. Transfer of Credits**

All courses included in an individual's graduate program of study must be approved by the student's committee and the Graduate School. The specific number of hours that may be

transferred from another program is determined by the student's committee. Courses to be transferred for the Master's degree must have been completed with a grade of B or better.

Courses to be transferred into a student's Master's program may consist of a combination of The University of Tennessee courses and courses from other institutions. The latter may not exceed one-third of the total hours requested. One-half of the total hours required must be taken at UT Knoxville. Under some circumstances, coursework from an external institution may not be transferred because these institutions may not have recognized accreditation.

Doctoral students who completed their Master's degree in the department are able to count up to 30 credit hours from their M.S. toward their Ph.D. program plan requirements (this excludes thesis hours). Graduate students enrolled in the M.S. en route to Ph.D. program will need to complete the [Request for Concurrent Master's Degree Form](#) and should complete the M.S. and Ph.D. program plan concurrently. In this case, all credit hours (except thesis hours) count towards completion of the Ph.D. program requirements.

## **L. Financial Assistance**

General information regarding [Graduate Assistantships](#) is available from the Graduate School. All assistantships are governed by the [Policy for the Administration of Graduate Assistantships](#).

The Department has several types of assistantships available, which are allocated to us from the college. These assistantships include Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTAssistant) and Graduate Teaching Associate (GTAssociate). Additionally, students may be able to serve as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) on funded research projects. For those with a 50% appointment, the work hours are 20 hours per week, excluding organized class time. For those with a 25% appointment, the work hours are 10 hours per week, excluding organized class time. Work responsibilities of different assistantships vary as described below, but all provide tuition, [maintenance fee](#), health insurance (if at least a 25% appointment), and a monthly stipend. Students with a .50 assistantship will need to be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours per semester to be considered full-time and those with a .25 assistantship will need to be enrolled in at least 9 credit hours per semester to be considered full-time. These requirements are consistent with graduate school policy, and students who are receiving financial aid will need to follow additional guidelines outlined by the graduate school.

### **1. Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates (GTA) and Their Responsibilities:**

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAssistant) are appointed for a one-year term with renewals possible as per the procedures outlined in "Application Procedure" in the next section. There are two types of GTA positions. CFS Teaching Assistantships support faculty instruction of undergraduate courses. They are 15-hours a week for nine or twelve months. Students with ELC Teaching Assistantships generally contribute to the mission of the [Early Learning Center](#). ELC Assistantships are 20-hours a week for twelve months with various duties in the ELC programs. GTAs at the ELC are allotted 196 hours of leave (approximately 10 weeks for 4/hr days). That includes university closings, along with personal leave and sick leave. A waiver of tuition and the



maintenance fee plus payment of health insurance and a stipend are provided by the college. All other fees are paid by the student. GTAs must maintain *at least* a B average and be full-time graduate students to retain eligibility for an assistantship.

Graduate Teaching Associates (GTAssociate) are appointed for a one-year term with renewals possible (see the preceding paragraph). The student teaches one course each semester as .25 of the assignment and assists the major professor to whom they are assigned the other .25. GTAssociates may not teach a course until they have “shadowed” a professor or non-tenure track faculty for one semester and also completed the [Best Practices in Teaching seminar](#). Additional guidelines for “Doctoral Teaching as a GT Associate” are located in [Appendix C](#).

## **2. Graduate Research Assistants and Their Responsibilities:**

The general information provided above for GTAs applies to GRAs except that these students are assigned to faculty to provide assistance with their research. CFS Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) may also be funded by contracts or grants from specific business, government or other agencies and foundations.

## **3. Application Procedure:**

Students generally first apply for assistantship funding when they apply for [admission](#) into the program. For subsequent years, students must make a formal request for subsequent funding by submitting the forms requested by the Graduate Committee.

## **4. Additional Sources of Funding:**

The College of Education, Health and Human Sciences has a link for graduate students wanting to apply for [College-based scholarships](#). General information on financial assistance is available from the University of Tennessee [Graduate School website](#). Information on funding sources outside the College is available from the Administrative Offices of the College, the Department of Child and Family Studies, and from the [Financial Aid Coordinator in the Graduate School](#). Graduate students are encouraged to begin seeking outside funding about a year preceding the academic year for which funding is needed, as some deadline dates are very early. To note, the Graduate Record Examination is required by many funding sources. We strongly encourage students to develop their skills in securing additional funding, as these skills will be beneficial throughout their careers.

## **5. Evaluation Procedures:**

Graduate assistants are evaluated in the following way:

- a. The Graduate Committee members review assistantship positions and evaluate applicants based on the supervisors’ assistantship evaluations, students’ progress towards degree and overall performance in the program, departmental needs, and available funding;
- b. The Graduate Committee makes recommendations to the Department Head on allocations of assistantships. The Graduate Committee also makes recommendations to the Department Head on retention of continuing graduate assistants;
- c. Official notification from the Department Head of admission and funding will be made subsequently; and
- d. Recipients accept or decline the awards in a written response (email) to the

## **6. Workspace Assignments:**

Each graduate assistant is provided with a workspace. Workspaces are located in the Jessie Harris Building. Each summer the DGS evaluates space needs and availability, consults with faculty, and makes recommendations to the Department Head. The Graduate Program Administrative Specialist (Mrs. Rachel Heston, 865-974-6382; [rxb289@utk.edu](mailto:rxb289@utk.edu)) then informs students about their allocated workspace for the academic year.

## **L. Faculty Review of Student Progress**

CFS faculty review Master's and Doctoral students' progress each spring semester to ensure that students are progressing in a timely fashion and that they have the necessary supports to be successful in the graduate program.

To accomplish this goal, students are asked to prepare and submit an annual evaluation document (format specified by the Graduate Committee) as well as an updated CV in the fall. The spirit of this review is a formal sharing of information among the faculty about students' progress so that all students can be provided with targeted feedback about their progress to date and recommendations if any areas were identified as in need of further development. The content of this review for each student includes progress towards degree, performance, professionalism, and interaction with faculty and peers. All tenured and tenure-track faculty, lecturers, M.S.-TL coordinators, and ELC directors are expected to participate in the review process.

There are two parts to this process. Prior to meeting, faculty and instructors review students' submitted materials and provide feedback in each of the specified areas in a joint document. In preparation for the review meeting, which occurs early in the spring semester, major professors for each student review the feedback and submitted materials. In the second part of this process, faculty and instructors meet and the student's major professor provides a brief overview of the student in the evaluative areas. In addition, faculty may solicit feedback and guidance to provide additional support for a specific student if a student is identified as being in need of improvement in one or more of the evaluative areas.

Students will receive a written summary within 14 working days after the review process is completed, prepared by their major professor. Students will have an opportunity to meet with their major professor to discuss the evaluation letter. Once both the major professor and student sign the letter, they will send it to the Department Head for a final signature.

## **M. Approval for Special Topics and Directed Study**

To request approval for these types of learning opportunities, please complete the Course Request Form for Special Topics and Directed Study (available from office staff in JHB 115). Students should consult with their major professor and committee when planning to take these types of courses to ensure they will help the student meet their professional goals while still meeting the requirements for their program of study. These courses are designed to supplement gaps in existing course content and thus should not overlap significantly with existing course offerings or courses that can be taken outside the department.

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**N. Responsibilities of an Alumni**

After completion of a degree, alumni are urged to notify the University, College, and Department of name, address, and position changes. In this way, the University can keep alumni informed of current events, while at the same time supply valuable information and data regarding our graduates and programs.

## IV. Master of Science Degree Programs

### A. General Requirements

See the current [Graduate Catalog](#) for basic information and course descriptions and [Appendix D](#) for a summary of the procedures for the Master's Degree.

The Graduate School has established a requirement for a culminating experience for all M.S. degree students at UTK. This policy reads as follows:

*The Master's degree is evidence of successful completion of a body of coursework, advanced understanding, and the ability to apply knowledge within a major field. Many master's degrees require a culminating experience. Examples of culminating experiences include an advanced seminar, creative product, exhibit, independent project, integrated case study or —simulation, internship, practicum, recital or thesis. Through this experience, the student —will demonstrate skills associated with the particular degree program, such as applied —performance, critical analysis, organization and writing.*

### B. Progression and Retention

The University policy on cumulative grade point average (GPA) requires graduate students to maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 in all graduate courses taken for a letter grade of A-F. If, after completion of 9 hours of graduate coursework, a student's GPA falls below 3.0, then the student will be placed on academic probation. The student will be able to continue graduate study if each semester's GPA is 3.0 or greater. If the semester GPA falls below 3.0 while on academic probation, then the student's graduate degree status will be terminated by the Dean of The Graduate School; and Master's students in the Department of Child and Family Studies must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 **in courses in the major for a degree**. If a student's GPA in courses in the major falls below 3.0, then the student will receive written notice by the Department Head, with a copy to the Graduate School. Consistent with the [Graduate Catalog](#) on academic standards, the Dean of The Graduate School then will evaluate the student's record and determine if the student is eligible to apply for a change of student status in another area or program of study.

### C. Master's Committees

Master's committees are comprised of the major professor and *at least* two additional faculty members with the rank of Assistant Professor or above. The committee members can include clinical faculty. An Instructor may also serve as a fourth member of the committee. The major professor serves as committee chairperson. All members of the committee may be departmental faculty members unless the student has a minor in another department. If the student has a minor, one member of the committee must be from the minor department. (Note: The 6 credit hours taken outside the department may not constitute a minor in CFS.) The committee should be selected no later than the second semester of full-time coursework or part-time equivalent. Graduate school policy indicates that at the very latest the committee must be formed by the time a student applies for admission to candidacy.

The procedure for receiving approval for faculty members to serve on a committee is the same as the procedure for determining the student's major professor; i.e., complete the "[Program Plan for Masters](#)" form. The same form is used to request a revision of the committee composition. To note, if a student would like to have a committee member

from outside the UT Knoxville system serve, they will need to submit a request with their major professor to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will then make a request to the Graduate School. Please leave adequate time before a proposal and/or defense meeting for this request to be evaluated by the Graduate School.

After consultation with their major professor, the student must indicate their intention to pursue either the thesis or practicum option for the Master's Degree. The student will commit to either option by submitting the [Program Plan for Masters](#) Degree. The student provides one copy to each committee member and the Graduate Programs Administrative Specialist (Mrs. Rachel Heston, 865-974-6382; [rx289@utk.edu](mailto:rx289@utk.edu)).

#### **D. Degree Options for Masters of Science Program, Research and Application Concentration (M.S.-RA)**

Students enrolled in the CFS M.S.-RA program may select either a thesis or practicum (non-thesis) option to complete their Master's degree. In rare cases and in consultation with the major professor, a student may select both.

##### **1. Thesis Option**

The Master of Science degree in Child and Family Studies provides a broad foundation for understanding human development and how families function in today's society. All Master's candidates enroll in CFS foundation courses, which include theoretical and empirical research of human development and family science literature plus a broad introduction to methods of research used in CFS. All M.S. students are expected to engage in a productive research project culminating in a thesis or practicum project. Students may choose to concentrate in Child and Family Studies with a concentration in Research and Application (a.k.a., M.S.-RA), leading to doctoral study or careers in community agencies serving children, youth, and families.

The CFS Research and Application (M.S.-RA) concentration requires a minimum of 37 credits (CR) of coursework: 13 credits in foundation coursework and 24 credits in specialization. The CFS foundation courses include CFS 510, 550, 552, 570, and 572. The 24 additional credit hours, selected with guidance of the student's Master's committee, are typically earned as follows: 9 credits in CFS-prefix courses, 6 credits in graduate course electives (which may include CFS-prefix courses), 3 credits in computation-based statistics (e.g., CFS 580; SOWK 605), and 6 credits of thesis research in CFS 500. Students seeking the M.S.-RA must select a Master's committee chairperson (major professor) and file a [plan of study](#) with the Department Head, no later than after completing their first semester of study or 10 hours of graduate course credit. Objectives of the M.S. thesis option are as follows:

- a. Child and Family Studies Disciplinary Knowledge
  - integrate the basic content within the fields of human development and family science and describe the historical evolution of these fields;
  - describe the basic concepts, contributions, and findings of major substantive areas in human development and family science;
  - analyze trends, issues, and future directions for the field of study in human development and family science; and
  - develop an in-depth concentration in human development and/or family science.

- b. Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks
  - define and identify concepts, principles, and underlying assumptions of major theories and conceptual frameworks in human development and family science; and
  - use theory for problem identification, and the development and implementation of programs and other applications.
- c. Research Methodology and Application
  - conceptualize the overall process of scientific research – study design and approaches, sampling, data collection/measurement, and data interpretation;
  - analyze, interpret, and formulate means for applying empirical findings; and
  - develop skills to evaluate and or conduct research as an independent scholar and in collaboration with others.
- d. Communication of Information
  - develop the ability to write in a scholarly manner; and
  - develop the ability to present information from the field of human development and family science before professional and lay audiences.

The Thesis Committee plays a critical role in a student's educational development. Each student's committee serves the following functions:

- a. Assist the student in planning a program of coursework appropriate to the student's background and goals and in compliance with departmental and Graduate School policies. It is the student's responsibility to propose a timetable for development and completion of coursework, research, and thesis for committee review.
- b. Provide guidance in the development of the student's research project and in writing the thesis proposal and thesis;
- c. Read and offer constructive feedback on the thesis proposal and thesis;
- d. Facilitate questioning by all committee members after the student has presented an oral summary of the thesis research; and
- e. Lead discussion of student's written and oral presentations among the committee members for the purpose of making pass/revise/fail decisions.

Some students have a difficult time selecting a major professor and committee members. This difficulty may be due to unfocused research interests or a lack of familiarity with departmental faculty. Faculty research interests are posted on the [department's website](#). Students should read faculty's recent publications and arrange meetings with faculty during the first semester to discuss goals and interests and to learn whether a faculty member is currently directing projects in which a student could become involved.

Information about research and the completion of the thesis:

- a. A minimum of two semesters is required for Master's level research and thesis completion. The thesis is a written account of original research conducted by the Master's student under the direction of their major professor and thesis committee. It serves as the culminating experience for thesis students. At least one manuscript from the thesis is encouraged to be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal. The student must enroll in CFS 500 (variable credit) each term they are planning research, collecting data, or writing the thesis. The student must be enrolled in 3 hours of CFS 500 credit during the semester in which the thesis is approved. If the thesis is approved after the first deadline date for graduation during a certain term, but prior to the second deadline date, the student is not required to enroll in CFS 500 and may graduate the next semester;
- b. The thesis must satisfy University requirements as explained in the Graduate School [\*Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations\*](#), and it must be approved by the thesis committee and the Graduate School Thesis/Dissertation Consultant. Prior to proposing, students should discuss the format of their thesis with their major professor. The major professor and thesis committee should agree on the format before the student begins work on the thesis. Students are encouraged to choose a thesis structure that is directly transferable into publication. It is recommended that students write and submit the thesis in the form of a complete manuscript. The complete thesis, in a form approved by the major professor, should be distributed to all committee members *at least two weeks* before the date of the final oral examination. Each Master's thesis student must pass an oral examination after completion of the thesis.
- c. The thesis defense is a formal meeting of the student and their committee, which the university community and the public at large are encouraged to attend. The examination is administered by the student's entire committee and is intended to evaluate the student's overall knowledge gained from the thesis process and presentation of the results. The written thesis and oral defense must be scheduled with the student's major professor and all members of the committee through the departmental office *at least two weeks* before the deadline published in the [\*Academic Calendar\*](#). The defense of the thesis will be administered in person in a university-approved facility, or in the form of an online meeting, by all members of the committee after completion of the thesis and course requirements. Presentation and defense of one's thesis is considered a capstone experience of paramount importance to graduate study. The oral defense is open to the public. The open nature of the oral defense is a historic tradition of scholarship that deserves to be honored. It signifies the importance of scholarship that is conducted in public view, where all ideas may be entertained and subject to challenge and defense and where the suppression of unpopular or iconoclastic ideas may be impeded. Thus, the public oral defense is simultaneously an obligation and safeguard of academic freedom. As part of this tradition, visitors are urged to listen to the student's presentation, the challenge from the committee, and the student's defense. At the appropriate time, the public audience is invited to join in the questioning of the student. Following the student's presentation of their work, the challenge, and the defense, the student and the visiting public are excused from the meeting room. The committee then begins its deliberations to evaluate the oral defense and the thesis itself. The student is told directly afterwards if they have passed.



## 2. Practicum Option

The philosophy underlying the practicum (non-thesis) option is to provide students with the opportunity to include ample coursework and field experience in their programs to assist them in meeting their career goals and objectives.

The practicum Master's committee serves the following functions:

- a. Assist the student in planning a program appropriate to the student's goals and in compliance with departmental and Graduate School policies. This may involve participation in planning sessions, or it may simply involve review and subsequent approval of the student's proposed plan of study;
- b. Provide guidance in the development of the student's culminating experience (practicum) and constructive criticism on the written analytical paper; and
- c. Participate in preparing, administering, and grading the student's comprehensive examination. Committee members should be cognizant of time limits and provide a choice of questions.

Practicum course requirements and culminating experience (non-thesis):

- a. The practicum option consists of a minimum of 36 hours of coursework with at least 24 hours in the department. Required courses include those listed in the thesis and practicum program plan form of which 18 credit hours must be taken in the department. Students will need to take CFS 564 (3 credits) and CFS 565 (3 credits).
- b. All practicum students must complete a culminating experience (practicum) with a written analytical paper consistent with the Master's degree requirements. Guidelines for conducting the [graduate practicum](#) are located on the CFS website. The practicum experience serves in lieu of a comprehensive examination and meets all of the Graduate School requirements for completing a comprehensive examination. Once the student's committee has approved the practicum proposal, members must sign the [Non-Thesis Practicum Approval](#) form. (Links to information about the graduate practicum are available in [Appendix E](#).)

### E. Teacher Licensure Concentration

The CFS M.S.-TL Concentration is designed for students seeking a M.S. degree along with teacher licensure in Pre-K through Grade 3. Students interested in the M.S.-TL must apply for admission to graduate study separately from admission to teacher licensure (PreK-3). Procedures are described in the [Graduate School Catalog](#). The teacher-licensure (PreK-3) concentration requires 36 hours of coursework and a written comprehensive examination. For further information about the teacher licensure programs, see the [Teacher Licensure Handbook](#). The [CFS website](#) has information about this option.

### F. Graduation and Commencement

Commencement is held at the end of fall and spring semesters only. [Graduation information](#) is available on the grad school website. Deadlines for ordering caps and gowns, paying fees, etc., are announced each semester in the [Academic Calendar](#).



## **V. Doctor of Philosophy Degree in the Department of CFS**

### **A. Overview**

The Ph.D. is a research degree. The acquisition of research skills is an integral part of the degree program. Doctoral students expand their knowledge beyond the Master's level; they become conversant about the "state of the art" in their respective areas, and develop the expertise necessary for contributing to and expanding existing bodies of knowledge.

Students in the doctoral program pursue in-depth studies of theory and existing empirical knowledge about human development and family relationships. A definitive characteristic of the Ph.D. program in CFS is a focus on research and scientific inquiry. This focus involves learning advanced methodologies and strategies to examine basic developmental phenomena and family relationships. The doctoral program also provides opportunities in training professionals who can design and empirically evaluate sophisticated intervention and prevention programs for individuals and families across the life course. The doctoral program in CFS consists of 72 hours of graduate credits, 24 of which are devoted to the dissertation.

### **B. Objectives of the Doctoral Program**

In obtaining a Ph.D., we expect that students will gain skills and knowledge in the following areas:

1. Child and Family Studies Disciplinary Knowledge
  - a. Describe the historical evolution of basic concepts, contributions, and findings of major substantive areas in human development and family science;
  - b. Analyze trends and future directions of research in human development and family science; and
  - c. Develop a specialization within the interdisciplinary fields of human development and family science.
2. Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks
  - a. Define and identify concepts, principles and underlying assumptions of major theories and conceptual frameworks in Human Development and Family Science.
  - b. Use theory for interpretation or generating solutions for human problems.
3. Research Methodology and Statistics
  - a. Conceptualize the overall process of scientific research – problem identification, design sampling, data collection/measurement, analysis, and data interpretation.
  - b. Develop advanced quantitative and/or qualitative analytic skills.
  - c. Conduct research in accordance with ethical standards.
  - d. Generate new knowledge in an area of specialization as an independent scholar and by collaborating with others.
4. Communication and Dissemination of Information
  - a. Write in a scholarly manner.
  - b. Present scholarly papers to national and/or international professional and lay audiences and organizations.
  - c. Publish at least one (preferably more) empirical articles in peer-reviewed journals.
  - d. Demonstrate an ability to effectively collaborate with faculty and other students.

### C. General Requirements:

See the current [Graduate Catalog/Knoxville](#) for basic information and course descriptions and [Appendix F](#) for a summary of the procedures for the Doctoral Degree. It is expected that students maintain at least a B average in their courses.

### D. Prerequisites and Admissions

Prerequisites are determined on an individual basis at the time of admission to the graduate program. Typically, students must have a thesis-based Master's degree before they can be admitted to the doctoral program. The student's committee will evaluate whether their thesis meets our requirements. However, in some cases, applicants with only an undergraduate degree may be considered for direct admission to the Ph.D. program if they have undergraduate research experience relevant to CFS, focused research interests, and a strong academic record. Students who are admitted without a Master's degree will complete requirements for the thesis-based Master's degree as part of their program of study. If in good standing after completing the Master's program requirements and under the recommendation of their graduate committee, these students will proceed directly into the Ph.D. program (MS en route to PhD).

Students admitted into the MS en route to PhD are encouraged to follow the steps for forming a committee consistent with directions provided to incoming Master's students and complete the MS program plan and the PhD program plan concurrently. MS en route to PhD students are required, per the graduate school, to complete the "[Request for Concurrent Master's Degree](#)" form to the graduate school at least two weeks prior to the deadline for submission of the graduation application for the Master's degree. With the exception of CFS 500 hours (Thesis Hours), all coursework taken to complete the MS degree will count towards completing the PhD program requirements. Students in the MS en route to PhD program will need to meet the committee requirements for a doctoral committee. The student's thesis will meet the requirements for the "pre-doc" for PhD students.

Doctoral students who completed their Master's degree in the department are able to count up to 30 credit hours from their M.S. toward their Ph.D. program plan requirements (this excludes thesis hours). Current MS students in the CFS program who anticipate applying to the PhD program are encouraged to not put "additional courses" on the MS program plan form, as these will then be counted toward the MS and are not able to be counted towards the PhD program plan.

### E. Doctoral Committee

Per graduate school policy, doctoral committees are composed of *at least* four members and at least two of those committee members must be tenured or tenure track UTK faculty. We strongly recommend that at least two CFS faculty serve on doctoral committees. Also, *at least* one member should be from outside the student's major department (external member). To be eligible to serve as a major professor for doctoral level students, a faculty member must have the rank of Assistant Professor or above and must have been granted approval to direct dissertation research by the CFS Department Head and voting faculty in the CFS Department. All faculty members with the rank of Assistant Professor or above are eligible to serve on doctoral committees; at least three members of the student's doctoral committee must be approved to direct doctoral research. A doctoral student should begin to form the committee during the first year of study. As one of the responsibilities of the student's doctoral committee is to guide the student on curricular decisions, it is important to have a committee formed early enough to help

provide guidance on coursework decisions and approve potential transferred courses. The graduate school does not provide a “required” deadline; however, in order to complete the comprehensive exam and be admitted into candidacy, the doctoral committee must approve the students program plan for doctoral degree.

After consultation with their major professor, the doctoral student requests approval of the major professor and doctoral committee by using the "[Program Plan for the Doctoral Degree](#)" form. If approved, the major professor initiates nomination of the committee by submitting the Graduate School's "[PhD Committee](#)" form to the student's committee for approval. The form is then transmitted to the Graduate School for approval. The same form and procedures are used for revision of a doctoral committee.

The functions of a doctoral committee are as follows:

- a. Meet with the student as requested by the major professor to plan a program of study appropriate to the student's goals and research interests and in compliance with department and Graduate School policies. This should be done during the semester in which the committee is appointed;
- b. Review the student's proposal and dissertation and offer suggestions for improvement where necessary. This is accomplished within the framework of the Proposal Hearing described below;
- c. Respond to the student's formal request to take the comprehensive examination within ten (10) working days of receipt of the request (see comprehensive exam section for additional information on requirements);
- d. With the help of the committee members from CFS, the major professor will generate written questions for the comprehensive examination. This is not a requirement for committee members from other departments, but they are invited to submit questions;
- e. The major professor will notify the student of the outcome of the comprehensive examination within fourteen (14) working days after completion; and
- f. Administer and attend the final oral examination after completion of all coursework and the dissertation and notify the student on the same day as the examination if they have passed the examination.

## **F. Course Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy**

Doctoral study in Child and Family Studies prepares the student for research and/or teaching positions in institutions of higher education, government or industry or public sectors. A minimum of 24 hours of graduate coursework (graded A-F [dissertation hours are graded S/NC and thus do not count in this 24 credit hour total) beyond the Master's degree is required. Students who have a Master's degree but did not complete thesis research sufficient to meet the doctoral program requirements (from another institution, or who completed the CFS MS practicum option) must complete a pre-doctoral research project before taking the comprehensive exam and presenting their dissertation proposal. This decision is made by the student's committee. Course requirements are located on the CFS website.

### **1. Pre-Doctoral Research Requirement**

- a. Each doctoral student must complete the Pre-Doctoral research requirement. With approval from the student's committee, a Master's thesis may be used to meet this requirement. The purpose of this requirement is to provide the student with independent research experience, including developing a research question, collecting, analyzing and interpreting data, prior to the dissertation. Scholarly work that generally will be accepted in lieu of the Pre-Doctoral research project include:

- a Master's thesis that is empirically based;
  - substantial involvement in a faculty research project in which the student identifies a distinctive aspect of the project to address; or
  - experience conducting secondary data analyses.
- b. If the student must complete the Pre-Doctoral research project, they should:
- present a proposal for approval by student's committee;
  - write a manuscript in journal format (e.g., APA style) and submit it to the committee for approval; and
  - upon approval, turn in a signed “[Approval of Pre-Doctoral Research Requirement](#)” form to the CFS Graduate Program Administrative Assistant.
2. The Pre-Doctoral research requirement must be completed before taking the comprehensive examination and before presenting the dissertation proposal (see below) to the student’s committee. In cases where a Master's thesis is not being used to meet this requirement, the student may register for one to three hours of credit in an independent studies course (CFS 581 or CFS 620) while completing this requirement.

### **G. Comprehensive Examination**

Evaluation of core knowledge is achieved through a comprehensive examination of required coursework that allows the student to integrate knowledge across courses, including research methods and statistics. The comprehensive examination should be taken during the final semester of required coursework, typically before the start of the third year of doctoral work and prior to the dissertation proposal meeting. Students wishing to schedule the exam earlier than these guidelines require approval from the student’s committee. A student cannot enroll in dissertation hours (CFS 600) until *after* successfully passing the comprehensive examination. Further, students cannot enroll in dissertation hours during the same semester in which the comprehensive exam is being completed. Thus, the exam should ideally be completed during the last semester of required coursework. During the written portion of the comprehensive examination, students are expected to continue to attend courses, complete assignments, and engage in assistantship responsibilities.

1. The comprehensive examination evaluates the student in the following five areas:
  - a. Foundation in the content of core CFS coursework
  - b. Knowledge of human development and family theories and frameworks
  - c. Research methods and quantitative/qualitative analyses
  - d. The student’s specialization area
2. Examination procedures:
  - a. The comprehensive examination should be scheduled to ensure that the entire process can be completed in one semester (i.e., start and finish within the same semester). The student and committee members will decide on the administration dates to meet this requirement. Students should not schedule the written exam or the question and answer session during the last four weeks prior to commencement and should avoid scheduling the exam during the summer to ensure committee members are available. One exception to this rule is that with approval from the student’s committee, the written exam can be taken during winter mini-term; however, the student’s committee are not expected to review written exam responses nor meet during winter mini-term. Rather, written responses should be reviewed early in the spring semester and the question and answer session should be scheduled thereafter

- per the directions below.
- b. The exam is a take-home, open-book essay exam that spans 10 calendar days.
  - c. The student will receive the exam materials (i.e., honor code and exam questions) electronically from their major professor at an agreed upon time on the first day (e.g., 4:30 p.m.). Exam responses and the signed honor code statement must be returned electronically to their major professor by that same agreed-upon time on the tenth day (a day constitutes a 24-hour period; e.g., Friday at 4:30 p.m. to Saturday at 4:30 p.m. counts as one (1) day). The honor code statement can be found in Appendix K of this handbook.
3. The student submits an electronic copy of the following materials to their major professor:
    - a. Signed honor code statement
    - b. Student's written responses in final form for grading; answers cannot exceed thirty (30) pages (typed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, Times-New Roman 12-point font), which is a limit for the *entire* comprehensive examination, not a per-question limit
    - c. Reference list
  4. Evaluation criteria for the comprehensive examination include:
    - a. Accuracy, breadth, and depth of content;
    - b. Clarity, organization, and analytic reasoning;
    - c. Adequate writing skills, the ability to develop and sustain a coherent line of argument.
  5. Process of evaluating the comprehensive examination:
    - a. Every committee member reads and evaluates responses to each question.
    - b. Each exam question response is evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis, with majority-rule approval (e.g., if three of four committee members Pass the response, then the response is ruled a Pass).
    - c. Successful passing of each question should be evaluated primarily on what is in the written document. Discussion during the question-and-answer session is used to help clarify responses and should not replace a poorly written response. At the conclusion of the question-and-answer session, if it is determined that an exam response is a Revise (i.e., in need of a written revision), the committee provides clarification and informs the student of suggestions towards revision for each exam item.
  6. Committee meeting:
    - a. The committee and student meet within two weeks after the comprehensive examination has been completed. The student is responsible for scheduling and making the room arrangements for a two-hour meeting with their committee. This meeting should be scheduled prior to the student receiving the examination questions.
    - b. The meeting will consist of a question-and-answer session with the student's committee. Committee members will have the opportunity to ask the student clarifying and other questions that arose during the reading of the exam responses. This question-and-answer session allows the student to clarify written responses and demonstrate knowledge by answering questions posed by the committee beyond what the student has written. Oral responses should not be used to replace poorly written responses to exam items. This meeting also allows committee members to provide constructive feedback to the student in preparation for potential revisions.
    - c. "[Admission to Candidacy Application](#)" forms are signed at this meeting if the student passes all items on the examination. Three copies of this form go to the

Graduate School and one copy to the CFS office along with the "[Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Completion](#)" form. The student is responsible for ensuring that all forms and documents are delivered to the necessary locations.

7. Procedures for revisions to exam responses:

- a. Students who do not successfully pass all exam questions during the first attempt have one additional opportunity to revise the identified response(s) in need of revision. The student's committee makes recommendations regarding how the student can strengthen the identified response(s) requiring revision.
- b. The student electronically submits the revised response(s) to the major professor by the date and time agreed upon in this meeting. It is recommended that students submit their revisions by no later than two weeks from the meeting. The major professor will distribute the revised response(s) to the committee.
- c. Each committee member will review the revised response(s) and will indicate to the student's major professor whether the revised response(s) received a Pass or a Fail. Each response must receive a majority decision of "Pass" in order to pass the exam. In situations of a tie (e.g., two committee members vote Pass, two vote Fail), the CFS Graduate Committee will be asked to weigh in and vote on the final Pass or Fail decision. Members of the CFS Graduate Committee who also served on the student's dissertation committee will be asked to recuse themselves. No committee meeting will be scheduled for a second question and answer session.
- d. The student's major professor will discuss the outcome of the revision with the student (i.e., whether the student received a Pass or Fail). If the student receives a Pass, the necessary forms identified in 6.c. will be completed and signed.
- e. A student who does not pass the exam after making revisions will be informed of this decision by their major professor. The student will also receive a letter from the CFS Department Head informing the student that they are being terminated from the degree program in CFS. A copy will be placed in the student's file.

## H. Admission to Candidacy

A doctoral student may be admitted to candidacy after passing the comprehensive examination and maintaining at least a B average in courses. Admission to candidacy must be secured at least one semester prior to the anticipated graduation date. Each student is responsible for filing their application for admission to candidacy, which must be signed by the committee members and approved by the Graduate School on the "[Admission to Candidacy Application](#)" form. The student will be notified when admission to candidacy has been approved. The *UT Graduate Student News* lists appropriate dates for admission to candidacy.

## I. Dissertation Proposal

Doctoral students develop a proposal, conduct an original research project that has been proposed, and document the original research project by the preparation of a written dissertation, which should result in publication of one to three articles in peer-reviewed journals. Prior to proposing, students should discuss the format of their dissertation with their major professor. The major professor and dissertation committee should agree on the format before the student begins work on the dissertation. Students are encouraged to choose a dissertation structure that is directly transferable into publications. It is *recommended* that students plan for two to three manuscripts as part of the proposal. The dissertation proposal should include an introduction and literature review that serves as the foundation for the study, a set of hypotheses or research questions that will be examined in the research, and a description of methods that will be employed to test the hypotheses/questions.



A proposal meeting is designed to evaluate the proposal and guide the research process. This meeting is to be scheduled after successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination (see above). At least *two weeks* in advance of the proposal meeting, the dissertation proposal is submitted to all committee members and an announcement of the proposal meeting is sent to the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant. If approved, the student files the "[Dissertation Proposal Approval](#)" form.

## J. Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense is a formal meeting of the doctoral student and their committee to which the university community and the public at large are encouraged to attend and participate. The examination is administered by the student's entire committee and must be scheduled (see the "[Scheduling Defense of Dissertation Form](#)") through the departmental office at least two weeks before the deadline published in the [Academic Calendar](#). The roles and responsibilities of each participant in the oral defense are significant and outlined below.

For the **student**, the meeting is the culmination of an intensive process of rigorous scholarship. Although built on the previous work of others and under the guidance of their committee, the dissertation is ultimately the student's own act of creation of knowledge. The student alone shoulders responsibility for the myriad decisions and the outcomes that govern the work of the dissertation. The oral defense is in fact a defense of those decisions about the choice of research topic and its importance, about how to approach its study, and how to organize, interpret, and present the findings so that they are comprehensible, replicable, and useful to subsequent scholars.

For the **committee**, the oral defense is the opportunity to challenge the student to clarify the choices and defend the interpretations presented in the dissertation. It is the committee's responsibility to evaluate the quality of this work, assuring that the student has attained the high standards of independent scholarly thought and action represented by the doctoral degree.

The oral defense is open to the **public**. The open nature of the oral defense is a historic tradition of scholarship that deserves to be honored. It signifies the importance of scholarship that is conducted in public view, where all ideas may be entertained and subject to challenge and defense and where the suppression of unpopular or iconoclastic ideas may be impeded. Thus, the public oral defense is simultaneously an obligation and safeguard of academic freedom. As part of this tradition, visitors are urged to listen to the student's presentation, the challenge from the committee, and the student's defense. At the appropriate time, the public audience is invited to join in the questioning of the student.

Following the student's presentation of their work, the challenge, and the defense, the student and the visiting public are excused from the meeting room. The committee then begins its deliberations to evaluate the oral defense and the dissertation itself. Upon completion of the evaluation, the committee will make a recommendation from any of the following options: (a) Pass – submit dissertation as is; (b) Pass – submit dissertation with revisions recommended by committee and reviewed by major professor only; (c) Rewrite the dissertation to address significant concerns the committee identified in the defense hearing and repeat defense hearing with committee members only; or (d) Fail. Committee members must sign an oral defense form. The members may choose to sign the dissertation approval form at this meeting. The student should bring the forms from the [Graduation Specialist](#) to the meeting to be signed by the committee. The completed forms will be sent to the graduate school by the major professor.

The defense of the dissertation will be administered in person in a university-approved facility, or in the form of an online meeting, by all members of the committee after completion of the dissertation and course requirements. Presentation and defense of one's dissertation is considered a capstone experience of paramount importance to graduate study.

#### **K. Change of Status Admission Procedures**

Students who are enrolled in the M.S. program in Child and Family Studies and desire to apply to the Ph.D. program are considered in one of two categories.

1. **Category One** applies to students who are completing requirements for the M.S. degree and who wish to apply for entry into the CFS Doctoral program. Procedures to be followed by students in Category One are:
  - a. One semester prior to completion of the M.S. degree, the student applies to the Ph.D. program by submitting an application per the guidelines on the [graduate application page](#) (e.g., a letter of professional goals statement outlining specific plans for doctoral study, and three letters of recommendation and official rating sheets from faculty who can evaluate the student's capacity for doctoral level work). A UT academic history should also be submitted as part of the application. The CFS Graduate Committee reviews the application and makes a recommendation to the Department Head. If the student is accepted, the Graduate School notifies the student of admittance to the Ph.D. program and a letter from the Child and Family Studies Department is sent to the student confirming the student's admission; and
  - b. Following acceptance into the CFS doctoral program, the student files the "[Request for Change of Graduate Program](#)" form with the UT Graduate School.
2. **Category Two** applies to students who are international students admitted to the M.S. program, who have completed a post-baccalaureate degree at a non-United States institution, and who wish to apply for entry into the CFS Doctoral program. Because graduate degrees from non-US institutions are often not recognized by the UTK Graduate School as constituting equivalent graduate work, the policy of CFS is to initially accept these students into the M.S. program with the expectation that those students will subsequently apply for admission to the Ph.D. program. Procedures to be followed by students in Category Two are:
  - a. The student informs their major professor and committee members of their desire to apply to the doctoral program. Normally this would occur no later than the end of the first year. Specifically, when the student's committee meets for approval of their Master's plan, their request for application into the Ph.D. program should also be discussed so that there is close convergence of the two plans. The student submits the request on the "Program Plan for the Doctoral Degree" to the committee. Both the "[M.S.](#) and [Ph.D.](#) Program Plan" forms, when approved by the M.S. committee, should be submitted to the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant and Director of Graduate studies and filed in the student's file;
  - b. The student applies to the Doctoral program by submitting an application per the guidelines on the [graduate application page](#) (e.g., a letter of professional goals statement outlining specific plans for doctoral study, and three letters of recommendation and official rating sheets from faculty who can evaluate the student's capacity for doctoral level work). A TOEFL score of at least 25 per section (the CFS minimum) and a UT academic history should also be submitted as part of the application. The CFS Graduate Committee reviews the application and makes a recommendation to the Department Head. If the student is accepted,



the Graduate School notifies the student of admittance to the Ph.D. program and a letter from the Child and Family Studies Department is sent to the student confirming the student's admission.

- c. Following acceptance into the CFS doctoral program, the student files the "[Request for Change of Graduate Program](#)" form with the UT Graduate School (and with the Center for International Education at UT, as appropriate).

*Please Note: Successful completion of the requirements of the M.S. program does NOT guarantee admission into the Ph.D. program. Also, an application package that warranted admission to the M.S. program might not warrant admission into the Ph.D. program. Applicants are encouraged to obtain new recommendation letters and rewrite their purpose statements to indicate both their preparation for and interest in the doctoral program.*

#### **L. Progression and Retention**

Please see the section under Master's programs.

#### **M. Research and Dissertation**

All doctoral students are required to conduct an original research project and to convey the organization, procedure, findings, and implications of the research in a written dissertation. While planning research, collecting data, and writing the dissertation, doctoral students must enroll in CFS 600. Per the graduate school, doctoral students are required to enroll in CFS 600 (minimum 3 hours) continuously from the time the dissertation proposal is approved, admission to candidacy is accepted, or enrollment in CFS 600 is begun, whichever comes first, including the semester in which the dissertation is accepted by The Graduate School. Leaves of absence for no more than 6 semesters may be granted under certain circumstances. All doctoral students are required to complete a minimum of 24 semester hours of CFS 600. The dissertation must satisfy University requirements as explained in the Graduate School's [Guide to Preparation of Theses and Dissertations](#), and it must be approved by the student's doctoral committee and the Graduate School Thesis/Dissertation Consultant.

#### **N. Publications**

It is recommended that as part of the proposal process or shortly after receiving doctoral candidacy, a student make plans with their major professor for the writing and publishing of research paper(s) on the dissertation research work. Students are encouraged to choose a dissertation structure that is directly transferable into publications. It is *recommended* to include two to three complete manuscripts in the dissertation. Dissertations that include multiple manuscripts should also provide an integrative introduction (Chapter 1) and discussion (Chapter 4 or 5 depending on number of manuscripts). It is expected that the major professor will be a co-author and approve the paper(s) prior to submission to scholarly journals. The plans should include a schedule with target dates for writing and submitting the paper(s). Students are encouraged to submit their work for presentation at national and international professional association meeting(s) prior to the dissertation defense date.

#### **O. Graduation**

Graduation information, including deadline dates for graduation, commencement information, the graduation application, and graduation requirement workshops are available from the [Graduate School](#). Commencement is held at the end of fall and spring semesters only. The [Academic Calendar](#) has details relating to graduation.

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## VI. Faculty

### A. The CFS Faculty

The CFS faculty is composed of talented researchers, teachers, and professionals who provide service to individuals and families across the life course. Faculty come from varied educational backgrounds, including child development, clinical, educational and developmental psychology, early childhood education, family science, human development, sociology, and cultural anthropology. This variety of backgrounds reflects the belief that the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge should be interdisciplinary in nature and conducted with sensitivity to issues of personal, economic, cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, and political diversity. Given this, our faculty offer many opportunities to become involved in research and/or outreach on children, youth, and families. For additional information about the faculty and their research interests, please see the [department's website](#). We strongly encourage reading individual faculty CVs to learn more about their scientific backgrounds and publication history.

### B. How to Contact CFS Faculty

Most CFS faculty are best contacted by email. Please allow sufficient time for them to respond.

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## **VII. Student Organizations, Professional Organizations, & Honorary Societies**

### **A. CFS Graduate Student Organization (GSO)**

All graduate students in the Department of Child and Family Studies are eligible and encouraged to join the GSO. The association's purpose is to promote professional development and serve as an effective communication channel for CFS graduate students within the college (the association's bylaws are located in [Appendix G](#)).

### **B. Other Professional Organizations**

Students are encouraged to check with their major professors, advisors, peers, and others regarding professional organizations that may represent their interests.

## APPENDIX A

### Department of Child and Family Studies Course Enrollment Policies

Please consult the Graduate Catalog for a full statement of university enrollment policies. The section entitled "Registration and Enrollment Requirements" governs graduate student enrollment. Several policies are excerpted below.

**Inactive Status.** A form letter is sent by the Department Head to inform students who have not been enrolled for three continuous semesters of their inactive status. Such students must reapply to and be readmitted by the Graduate School and by the CFS Department before they are eligible to resume coursework toward a degree.

**Grades.** Each student's Grade Point Average (GPA) during the graduate program is reviewed by CFS and the Graduate School. S/NC grading may comprise no more than one-fourth of the student's total graduate hours in the doctoral program. Students should consult the Graduate Catalog for a statement of the policy on the grade of "I" (incomplete). The grade of Incomplete is given only when a student has been performing **satisfactorily** in a course and cannot finish all requirements **due to unforeseen circumstances**. If the "I" grade remains unchanged for one semester, the grade of "I" reverts to the grade of "F," after which a change of grade is no longer possible or permissible.

**Full-Time versus Part-Time Enrollment.** All graduate students are expected to enroll in at least six hours of coursework during both fall and spring semesters. In fact, CFS encourages students to enroll in nine hours per semester to maintain the proper sequencing of course work and foster a timely progression toward the degree. We actively discourage part-time enrollment on the part of graduate students because it impairs the continuity of contact with faculty and other graduate students that is an important component of the graduate school experience. Students with a .50 assistantship should be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours to maintain the assistantship and are considered as being enrolled full-time. Students with a .25 assistantship should be enrolled in at least 9 credit hours to maintain the assistantship and are considered as being enrolled full-time. Students with a .50 assistantship are expected to perform effectively in their courses and complete the required 20 hours of assistantship work and thus should exercise caution before seeking additional employment to supplement their income.

**Maximum Load.** The maximum graduate student course load is 15 credit hours. The maximum enrollment for which a graduate student can register during summer is 12 credit hours (not more than six credit hours in each of the two summer sessions). Any exceptions to the above should be requested through The Graduate School.

**Graduate Assistantships and Course Load Requirements.** Students on graduate assistantships (GTAssist, GTAssoc, GRA) are required to be enrolled as full-time students and must be registered as full-time students during fall and spring semesters. Students with graduate assistantships may choose to enroll during summer terms/semester. For GTAssist, GTAssoc, GRA: if the contract is .25 FTE, full-time enrollment is 9-13 credits. If contract is .50 (2) FTE, full-time enrollment is 6-11 credits.

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**Summer Term Enrollment and Use of University Facilities.** During the summer terms/semester, all graduate students using university facilities (including faculty advising) must be registered for at least three credit hours. Those who are working on thesis or dissertation research should register for CFS 500 or 600, respectively. Having begun dissertation work, all students must enroll fall, spring, and summer in CFS 600 (three to 15 credit hours). In cases where registration for research is not appropriate, and no other course is available, students should register for three credit hours of CFS 502. Although there is no set maximum number of 500 or 600-level thesis or dissertation hours, the University encourages students to move as quickly and consistently as possible in completing their degrees.

## APPENDIX B

### Graduate Student Forms

Forms required for graduate students by the University of Tennessee are available on the [Graduate School](#) website.

Forms required for graduate students by the Department of Child and Family Studies are available on the CFS website at the following links.

#### **Forms for All CFS Graduate Students**

- The Course Approval Form, used to request approval of special topics and independent study courses, may be obtained from office staff in JHB 115.
- Graduate Assistantship [Evaluation](#)
- Graduate Assistantship [Application](#)

#### **Forms for CFS Masters Students**

- Program Plan for M.S. with [Research and Application Concentration](#)
- Program Plan for M.S. with [Teacher Licensure Concentration](#)

#### **Forms for CFS Doctoral Students**

- CFS Doctoral Degree [Program](#)
- Approval of [Pre-Doctoral Research](#) Requirement
- Doctoral [Comprehensive Examination](#) (Specials) Completion
- Dissertation [Proposal Approval](#)
- [Request for Concurrent Master's Degree Form](#)

## APPENDIX C

### **Department of Child and Family Studies Doctoral Student Requirements for Teaching as a Graduate Teaching Associate**

Doctoral students interested in teaching independently must: (a) complete the [Best Practices in Teaching workshop series offered through the Graduate School](http://gradschool.utk.edu/training-and-mentorship/bpit/); and (b) shadow the course they are interested in teaching. Both of these requirements must be met prior to independently teaching a course, but they do not need to be sequenced in any particular way. In other words, students could shadow at the same time they are participating in the Best Practices workshop, or they could complete the workshop before or after shadowing. Information about the Best Practices workshop series is available on the Graduate School website: <http://gradschool.utk.edu/training-and-mentorship/bpit/>.

Students should initiate the process of shadowing by identifying a course they are interested in teaching and seeking out permission to shadow from a faculty or staff member who regularly teaches the course. Shadowing is a formal arrangement between a graduate student and a faculty or staff member and must be guided by a contract. The shadowing contract should be developed and endorsed by the faculty or staff member and student prior to the start of the class and must be submitted to the Director of CFS Graduate Studies. The contract should outline student and instructor responsibilities and ensure that the following *minimum requirements* are met: (a) students must attend at least 90% of class sessions; (b) students must give at least 2 guest lectures when the faculty member is present; and (c) students should be involved in some way with grading and evaluation. Instructors are expected to provide direction and feedback on the guest lectures, and to create opportunities for student participation in grading and evaluation. Although not required, we encourage the student and faculty member to arrange at least one opportunity for additional evaluation during the semester that the graduate student is independently teaching the course. Typically, shadowing is expected to occur independently of GA assignments and responsibilities. Please note that shadowing may partially overlap with GA responsibilities in unusual circumstances but that such modifications would need to be approved by the assistantship supervisor.

At the conclusion of the semester during which shadowing takes place, the supervising faculty or staff member should provide an additional signature on the contract to affirm that the agreed upon requirements were completed. The student should then submit this along with evidence of completion of the Best Practices in Teaching workshop to the Director of CFS Graduate Studies and the Department Head.

Requests to waive one or both of the requirements should be done in writing to the CFS Director of Graduate Studies. The request must provide clear evidence of alternative sources of teaching training, teaching experience, and/or teaching effectiveness and is subject to approval by the Director of CFS Graduate Studies, the Graduate Committee, and the Department Head.

## APPENDIX D

### Department of Child and Family Studies Summary of Procedures for Master's Degree

<u>PROCEDURES</u>	<u>UNDER DIRECTION OF</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Admission as a potential degree candidate	Office of Graduate Admissions	Prior to completing 12 hours of graduate courses
Formation of Master's committee	Select Major Professor	Upon completion of 12 hours of graduate courses
Submission of application for admission to candidacy	Master's committee and University Registrar's Office	At least one semester prior to graduation*
Approval of admission to candidacy	Dean of Graduate School	Prior to graduation

#### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THESIS OPTION

Submission of application for graduation	University Registrar's Office	At beginning of term of graduation*
Submission of thesis to Master's committee	Student	At least two weeks prior to final exam
Scheduling of thesis defense	Student and Committee	No later than four weeks prior to commencement*
Thesis defense	Master's Committee	No later than four weeks prior to commencement*
Approval and acceptance of final copy of thesis	Master's Committee and Graduate School	After final exam, no later than two weeks prior to commencement*
Removal of Incomplete(s)	Instructor of Course	No later than one week prior to commencement*

#### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PRACTICUM OPTION

Submission of application for graduation	University Registrar's Office	Beginning of term of graduation*
Payment of graduation fee	Bursar's Office	Beginning of term of graduation*
Project defense	Master's Committee	No later than three weeks prior to commencement*



## APPENDIX E

### **Masters Non-Thesis Practicum (CFS 564 & 565)**

The following information is available on the [CFS website](#) for Master's students who plan to complete a community practicum (CFS 564 & 565) as part of their program of study. There is general information about the practicum option as well as information on how to develop and set up the practicum, orientation material for the student and agency supervisor, evaluation material, and the form used by the student's committee to approve the practicum placement.

#### Graduate Community Practicum Documents

- [Guidelines for the Practicum](#)
- [Part I: Developing and Setting Up a Community Practicum](#)
- [Part II: Faculty Supervisor's Letter to the Agency Supervisor](#)
- [Part III: Orientation Information for Interns and Supervisors](#)
- [Part IV: Practicum Student Evaluation Form](#)
- [Part V: Agency Evaluation Form](#)
- [Part VI: UTK Dismissal Policy Form](#)
- [Part VII: Checklist of Materials in Student File](#)
- [Master's Non-Thesis Practicum Approval Form](#)

## APPENDIX F

### Department of Child and Family Studies

#### Summary of Procedures for Doctoral Degree

<u>PROCEDURES</u>	<u>UNDER DIRECTION OF</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Admission as a potential degree candidate	Office of Graduate Admissions and Major Department	Prior to completing 15 hours of graduate courses
*Appointment of doctoral committee	Dean of the Graduate School on recommendation of the Department Head	During the first year of graduate study
*Comprehensive examination	Major Department	Prior to admission to candidacy
*Language examination(s)**	University Registrar's Office	Prior to admission to candidacy
Submission and approval of application for admission to candidacy	Doctoral Committee and Dean of the Graduate School	At least one semester prior to graduation**
<u>GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS</u>		
Submission of application for graduation	University Registrar's Office	At beginning of term of graduation**
Payment of graduation fee	Bursar's Office	At the beginning of term of graduation**
Submission of dissertation to doctoral committee	Student	At least two weeks prior to defense of dissertation examination
Scheduling of defense of dissertation examination	Student, Committee, and University Registrar's Office	No later than one weeks prior to defense of dissertation examination***
Defense of dissertation examination	Doctoral Committee	No later than four weeks prior to commencement***
Approval and acceptance of final copy of dissertation and doctoral forms	Doctoral Committee and Graduate School	After defense of dissertation examination and no later than two weeks prior to commencement***
Removal of Incomplete(s)	Instructor of Course	No later than one week prior to commencement***

\*The order of these items varies with individual program

\*\*Not required in some programs.

\*\*\*Deadline dates are printed in the [Deadline Dates for Graduation](#)

## **APPENDIX G**

### **Department of Child and Family Studies Graduate Student Organization (GSO) Constitution**

#### **ARTICLE I: Name and Mission**

##### **Section I: Name**

The name of this organization shall be Child and Family Studies Graduate Student Organization (hereafter referred to as the CFS-GSO).

##### **Section II: Mission**

The mission of the CFS-GSO is to promote and coordinate professional development and service activities for graduate students in the Child and Family Studies department, and to act as the liaison between CFS graduate students and the faculty/administration in the department of Child and Family Studies.

#### **ARTICLE II: Committee**

##### **Section I: Executive Committee**

- A. Eligibility to serve on executive committee:
  - a. Able to serve from April 1 until March 31<sup>st</sup> of the following academic year.
  - b. Fulfill all requirements of eligibility to be a member of the CFS-GSO, which include:
    - i. Be a current part- or full-time graduate student of the University of Tennessee in the Child and Family Studies Department
    - ii. Adhere to rules set forth by the CFS-GSO Constitution
    - iii. Eligibility to serve on executive committee: Must attend a minimum of 7 of the 9 CFS-GSO meetings from April 1 – March 31<sup>st</sup>.
- B. Executive Committee Officers
  - a. The CFS-GSO shall have six officers: the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Graduate Student Senate (GSS) Representative, Outreach and Engagement Chair, and First-Year Student Representative.
- C. President
  - a. Oversees the committee meetings
  - b. Calls regular and special meetings
  - c. Prepares an agenda for meetings
  - d. Reserves meeting space
  - e. Communicates with the organization's advisor regarding decisions and updates
  - f. Maintains registration with the UTK student organization office
  - g. Coordinates student mentor-mentee pairings for incoming students

- h. Oversees the organization of the New Student Orientation
- D. Vice President
  - a. Carries out responsibilities of the President in the President's absence
  - b. Organizes at least three (3) professional development activities/opportunities per service term
  - c. Assists the President in administrative tasks, per the President's request
- E. Secretary
  - a. Maintains accurate and current information of the organization and membership
  - b. Takes meeting notes in each CFS-GSO meeting
  - c. Forwards meeting notes to committee officers and other meeting attendees after each meeting
  - d. Takes attendance at all meetings and keeps record of attendance
- F. Treasurer
  - a. Maintains an accurate and current account of all organizational funds
  - b. Responsible for dispensing of funds in accordance with the goals and programs established by the organization
  - c. Submits a yearly financial statement to the GSO Advisor
- G. GSS Representative
  - a. Attends GSS meetings regularly
  - b. Represents the CFS graduate students at GSS meetings
  - c. Relays important information discussed at GSS meetings to the CFS graduate student community
- H. Outreach and Engagement Chair
  - a. Organizes at least two (2) social events for the CFS graduate students per semester
  - b. Organizes at least one (1) service project for the CFS community per semester
  - c. At the Outreach and Engagement Chairs discretion, they may form an ad hoc committee to support the CFS-GSO efforts.
- I. First-Year Representative
  - a. Acts as a liaison between the first year CFS graduate students and the CFS-GSO by communicating student requests, needs, etc.
  - b. Will create a Google forum that allows new incoming students to begin asking questions and bringing forth concerns as they get admitted into the program.
  - c. Will serve as a liaison for the new incoming students and the GSO executive committee from the start of the term in April 1 until a new First-Year Representative is elected from the new cohort in the following September.

## **Section II: Advisor**

- A. The advisor must be a faculty or staff member of University of Tennessee.
- B. Responsibilities of the advisor:
  - a. Oversees, supports, and advises the executive committee
  - b. Oversees official documentation, including signing, advising, and revising paperwork
  - c. Acts as a liaison between the CFS-GSO and the CFS faculty/administration

### **ARTICLE III: Membership**

#### **Section I: Non-Discrimination/Same-Sex Organizations**

- A. Membership is to be open to all CFS graduate students, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, or covered veteran status.
  - a. Same Sex Organization, requirements:
    - i. Registered student organizations, including those affiliated with an extramural organization shall be open to all students- unless the organization, by its nature, exists explicitly for a certain subgroup- in selecting its membership. The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights has established clear criteria for exemption from Title IX for student organizations. The criteria are as follows:
      - 1. The organization must have tax-exempt status under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code.
      - 2. Members must be limited to students, staff, or faculty at the University of Tennessee.
      - 3. The organization must be a “social fraternity or sorority” as defined by the United States Department of Education.
- B. A member of the CFS-GSO is defined as any CFS graduate student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in good academic standing, who adheres to all rules set forth in the CFS-GSO Constitution, and who attends a minimum of 4 CFS-GSO meetings and CFS-GSO voted on events held in the academic year.

#### **Section III: Recruitment Process**

- A. Executive Committee Officer Recruitment
  - a. Executive committee officer recruitment will take place in March of each year. Calls for officer nominations will take place in the March CFS-GSO meeting, and over the CFS Graduate Student Listserv. Voting for officer positions will occur in April. Voting will be overseen by the Faculty Advisor.
- B. Member Recruitment

- a. Member recruitment for CFS-GSO will take place via the CFS Graduate Student Listserv. Recruitment announcements will be made regularly.

## **ARTICLE IV: Procedures**

### **Section I: Meetings**

- A. CFS-GSO shall meet once a month during the following months: August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, and May. April will be a transition month so that the new executive team can be trained by the previous executive team on the tasks for each respective position, thus no official CFS-GSO meeting will be held that month unless decided upon by the new executive committee. The meeting held in May will be for planning and preparing for the New Graduate Student Orientation that is held in August.
- B. Meetings will be announced to members in advance via the CFS Graduate Student Listserv.
- C. All meetings of the CFS-GSO, except for those that contain confidential information, shall be open to the public.
- D. The executive committee may schedule more than one meeting a month in the case of upcoming events or pressing needs.

### **Section II: Voting**

- A. Any matters that may need to be voted on will require a hand vote and majority among the members present at the time.
- B. In the case of a split vote, voting will occur via a poll distributed through email to all members.

### **Section III: Elections**

- A. Eligibility to serve on the executive committee include:
  - a. All eligibility requirements of a member are fulfilled
  - b. Ability to serve for an entire academic year
  - c. Candidates may be self-nominated and/or nominated by any CFS graduate student
  - d. Must attend at least one meeting before running
  - e. Limited to one position per year
- B. Term
  - a. Committee members will serve until resignation, graduation, or impeachment

- b. Committee members can be voted off at any point in the academic year by the committee for neglecting responsibilities, failing to abide by the constitution, or for unethical behavior.
- C. Voting
  - a. Nominations will be submitted to the Faculty Advisor via email, and votes will be submitted via online survey, to the Faculty Advisor in March. A majority vote formalizes officer position. In the event of a tie, the Executive Committee Officers will make the final decision via majority vote.
  - b. The election of the First Year Representative takes place around the third week in September by a majority vote of the first-year cohort. Nominations will be submitted to the President via email. Self-nominations and nominations from members of the new cohort will be accepted. Voting will take place via an online survey. The term of the First Year Representative will be from the date of their election to the date of a newly elected First Year Representative of the following school year.

#### **ARTICLE V: Financial Statement**

- A. There are no dues for membership.
- B. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the budgeting, disbursement of funds, and getting payment authorization from the organization's advisor. The Treasurer is also responsible for following all University of Tennessee cash-handling and accounts payable policies.
- C. A yearly financial statement will be provided to the organization's advisor for review by the Treasurer.
- D. In the event of the dissolution of this group, all accrued funds and assets shall revert to the Department of Child and Family Studies.



## APPENDIX H

### Department of Child and Family Studies Helpful Hints and Suggestions From Former and Current Graduate Students

**First, a note from our GSO:** The graduate handbook is here to assist you throughout your journey in graduate school here in the Department of Child and Family Studies. We know the abundance of information can be overwhelming, so please don't be afraid to reach out to students further along in the program with any questions you might have. We pride ourselves in being a supportive group of people and we welcome the addition of new students each year!

#### *Information Related to the Mechanics of Graduate School*

**The Director of CFS Graduate Studies** will help you plan your course schedule or plan of study for the first year and answer general questions you may have regarding CFS programs. During your first few months at UTK, take advantage of formal opportunities, such as classes and research seminars, and informal opportunities, such as departmental parties and visits over coffee, to get to know the faculty both professionally and personally. Then, you choose a major professor and later in consultation with your major professor, the members of your committee.

**The Graduate School website** is an important resource and provides [deadlines](#) for thesis, non-thesis, and dissertation defenses and graduation, a [guide](#) to the preparation of theses and dissertations, and provides other very helpful information related to obtaining your degree.

**All CFS tenured and tenure-track faculty are on nine-month appointments.** Most regular CFS faculty members use their three-month summer break to do research, writing, or consulting. Often these tasks require faculty to be away from campus, out of town, or out of state for part or all of the summer. You may find it difficult to schedule your committee meetings and thesis/non-thesis/dissertation defense during the summer because faculty members may not be available. Schedule practicum, comprehensive exams, or defenses, during the nine-month academic year, if at all possible. Be sure to negotiate any summer-contact arrangements with your professors prior to commencement!

**Don't wait for faculty to initiate contact with you.** If you are interested in knowing more about faculty members and their research, schedule an appointment. Faculty calendars get very busy as faculty attempt to juggle the many roles of a university professor, so appointments are usually better than drop-ins for both you and the faculty.

**Choosing a major professor is important.** The online CFS Faculty Directory is a useful web site to help you learn initially about our faculty. You need to work with someone who is a good match, so get to know all of the faculty, and then select a major professor who can best help you meet your graduate school goals.

Are you interested in **being involved in research**, presenting papers at professional conferences, writing grant proposals, or writing articles for publication, but have never done so and, consequently, do not know how to get started? Talk to any faculty member. Faculty are delighted

to hear a student say, "I would like to write a paper for presentation at SRCD or NAEYC or NCFR or AERA; could you help?" Faculty will be eager to share advice and even co-author and co-present. This mentoring of graduate students into professional activities and development is an important and valued part of their jobs.

**Put potential questions in writing to your professors.** This aids in communication between the two of you and forces you to clarify your thoughts.

**Master's students plan to talk to your major professor as soon as possible** about your program and options (i.e., thesis vs. practicum, courses to take, etc.).

**Talk with your major professor about scheduling your course work.** This is important because most courses are taught only once each year or some only every two years. Other courses are offered in a sequence (the doctoral statistics sequence is a good example); begin the sequence early. Talk with your major professor about your goals, career aspirations, and schedule and deadlines for finishing graduate school. If you are a new student, speak with your temporary assigned advisor, but also talk with your peers.

**Pre-register as early as possible.** Classes fill up quickly! Courses can be dropped if less than 12 graduate students register for 500-level courses and five for 600-level courses.

**Take nine hours during the fall and spring semesters** and one summer class if you want to try to graduate in two years (for the Master's program).

Try buying your **textbooks** online before the semester begins to save money and get acquainted with the material.

You probably will have the opportunity to conduct research or in some way be involved in a project using **human subjects**. UTK has very specific guidelines related to the use of human subjects in research and educational settings. It will be helpful to talk with faculty and students who have submitted forms for approval of research with human subjects by the Institutional Research Board (IRB). The chair of the department's IRB committee reviews and signs off on all CFS human subject requests. Once approved, it is forwarded to the Department Head for approval and, if approved, is forwarded to the university IRB.

UTK offers several services for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). ***The GTA Seminar***, for which you can receive two hours of graduate credit, is offered at the beginning of each fall semester and is usually held in August. Check with the CFS Graduate Studies Administrative Specialist, Mrs. Rachel Heston.

In the past, our department has participated in the Southeastern Child and Family Studies Symposium (sometimes called **Quint State**) along with Virginia Polytechnic Institute, University of Georgia, Mississippi State University, and Auburn University. The two-day meeting rotates annually among the schools and is designed to provide graduate students a forum for presenting research papers, theoretical papers, or research in progress to an audience of other students and faculty. The meetings are usually during spring semester; work with your major professor and plan to present a paper at least once during your tenure at UTK. You will find it an enjoyable and worthwhile experience. Most students agree that this is a nonthreatening and encouraging environment in which to develop and practice presentation skills. Important networking, job hunting, and socializing also are a part of Quint-State.

**Travel support** to professional organizations' program presentations can be made by applying to the GSA Office. Forms are available on-line. If you are presenting a paper, the department may provide some financial support. See the Department Head's Administrative Assistant, Scarlett Powell.

**Job announcements.** Check the Bulletin Board in JHB 115 mailroom, or the white binder, which also contains job announcements received in the CFS departmental office. Check it when you are curious or job hunting.

**A mail folder** is provided for each CFS graduate student and is located in the department office on the first floor of JHB. All departmental, college, and university announcements pertaining to graduate students, as well as other campus and off-campus mail, will be distributed to you here. It's up to you to check your mail folder and messages (clipped to your hanging folder). Please be sure to give your current e-mail address to the CFS Graduate Studies Administrative Specialist, Mrs. Rachel Heston.

**The UTK Office of Information Technology (OIT)** offers short courses to introduce you to the computing system at UTK. Some courses are only an hour long; others meet for several hours over a period of a week, or some courses are available on videotape in the library. A timetable of free courses is available from OIT and is published in a newsletter each semester and is listed in the *Daily Beacon*. Visit the [\*OIT Training and Workshops\*](#) website for additional information.

### ***Information Related to the Cultivating Your CFS Network (and Taking Care of Yourself!)***

**Invest time in getting to know your fellow graduate students.** Participate in the CFS Graduate Student Organization (GSO). GSO posts announcements of its meetings and activities and will help you be informed about issues in the department and college. View your fellow students as peers and potential colleagues. The networking you begin during graduate school can blossom into collaborative efforts such as manuscripts, research, presentations, and psychosocial support. Often study and research groups form around common interests.

**Consult current graduate students** for help in learning about the graduate school atmosphere.

**Ask a "veteran"** for locations of cheap entertainment (e.g., "dollar movies", Waterfront Park across Neyland Drive in front of the stadium, the old World's Fair Park, IJAMS Nature Center).

No matter how busy you are, **take time to nurture friendships and take care of yourself** (i.e., self-care, exercise, etc.).

**If you are a parent, remember:** your children are only children once, don't miss it. Set aside a special time for each child every day. When things are really hectic, make dates children can look forward to when you are done.

**Allow yourself the time to be curious.** You are about to meet people with varied interests who will speak passionately about their areas of interest. You may find yourself saying, "That's what I want to do for a thesis" several times in your first few semesters. Take your time. Choosing a major area of study is a lot like eating at a buffet; sample some of the different dishes first, then go back for the ones in which you are really interested.

**Be wary of overloading yourself.** Students try to balance work and school demands, and most are able to do so successfully. However, your first year might be the time to get a good footing.

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The first few courses will lay the groundwork for a great deal of your future classes. Therefore, it is easy to become overloaded with work and the responsibilities to your classes. Do your best to get a good start and then you can take a more rigorous class load.

**Develop a stress-relief routine.** From a preservationist point of view, you can't finish what you start if you burn out. Carve out some time to do some non-school related things, like exercise, painting, white-water rafting, exploring the Smoky Mountains, or some other restful or fun activity. It will help refresh your mind and body.

**Have an appreciation for the time of others.** Your instructors will appreciate it if you are able to use memos, notes, or e-mail instead of always requesting face-to-face meetings. This helps everyone be more productive. Sometimes face-to-face meetings are necessary, so don't be afraid to ask for them. However, some questions do not require a formal meeting.

**Finally, if your own information-seeking efforts do not pan out, don't hesitate to ask "simple" questions** such as, "Where's a good place to get some lunch?," "Where can I buy an extra notebook or some computer disks?," and "Where, exactly, is the library?" Face it, when you're a new student, the few minutes you spend asking other students simple questions may save you hours of frustration and walking in circles.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Department of Child and Family Studies Office Procedures for GTAs & GRAs**

By following the procedures outlined below for the new academic year, we can increase efficiency by streamlining and empowering each GTA/ GRA to be more directly responsible for their overall job and/or function within the CFS Department. This will move all of us toward a more efficient use of resources, a higher level of productivity, and an increase in professional satisfaction.

#### **Coursework and Assignments**

From time to time, it may be necessary to direct your students to your mail bin in the CFS office; however, this should be minimized as much as possible. Assignments, papers, binders, and notebooks not picked up will be destroyed at the end of each term.

#### **Work Requests**

Submit all work requests on the Work Request Form along with clear instructions and deadlines. Work Request Forms are available in the CFS office.

CFS clerical support staff should never be asked to perform personal word processing jobs during their normal work hours.

Be courteous to staff at all times.

Staff members are supervised only by the Department Head and the Office Supervisor, not graduate students or faculty. Do not assume responsibility for correcting staff.

#### **Examinations**

To make arrangements for a suitable office space, a two-day advance notice for make-up examinations is needed.

GTAs must make arrangements for monitoring make-up exams.

#### **Copy Machine**

GTAs that are fully responsible for teaching a specific course will be given a code number for the copying machine. Only make copies related to the course that you are teaching so we can plan for future costs relating to specific courses.

No mass copying will be permitted.

Do not use the CFS copy machine for personal use nor for your personal coursework.

Do not instruct students to come into the CFS office and use the copy machine.

Do not make copies outside of CFS and expect to be reimbursed.

### **Classroom Equipment**

All of the classrooms in the Jessie Harris Building are SMART classrooms and should have all of the equipment you need to present in or teach a class.

If you need assistance or additional equipment in a classroom, contact CFS office staff to reserve our department's auxiliary TV/VCR or the LCD Projector. **Last minute reservations cannot be guaranteed.**

### **Meeting with Department Head**

All meetings are to be arranged by appointment so the Department Head and you can devote the necessary quality time and direct attention to the meeting topic(s). If you desire such a meeting, please call the Office Supervisor in the main office to schedule an appointment with the Department Head.

Please put your concerns or questions in writing before you meet with a faculty member or the Department Head. This practice will help to keep the meeting focused and will allow the Department Head or faculty member to give some thought to your concerns before the meeting.

### **Computer Use**

You and your students will have access to the Jessie Harris computer labs as well as those located at other sites across the University.

The computers in the main office are for support staff **only** and are not for student use.

To receive the appropriate information and access to JHB and the computer lab spaces in JHB, please complete the Graduate Assistant Request form (see next page), including required signatures and submit it *in person* to the Graduate Program Administrative Specialist, Mrs. Rachel Heston, in JHB 115.

## APPENDIX J

### Department of Child and Family Studies Important Websites for Graduate Students

- Best Practices in Teaching  
<http://gradschool.utk.edu/training-and-mentorship/bpit/>
- Center for Global Engagement  
<https://cie.utk.edu/>
- Counseling Center  
<http://counselingcenter.utk.edu/>
- Graduate School  
<http://gradschool.utk.edu>
- Graduate Catalog  
<mics/graduate-catalog/>
- Graduate Student Appeals Procedure  
<https://studentsuccess.utk.edu/academicsuccess/academic-appeals/>
- Graduate Student Senate  
<http://gss.utk.edu/>
- Graduate Admissions  
<http://graduateadmissions.utk.edu/>
- International House  
<https://ihouse.utk.edu/>
- Student Conduct and Community Standards  
<http://studentconduct.utk.edu/>
- Office of Equity and Diversity  
<http://oed.utk.edu>
- Office of Multicultural Life/Frieson Black Cultural Center  
<https://studentlife.utk.edu/multicultural/>
- Office of Research & Engagement: Office of Research Integrity  
<http://research.utk.edu/compliance/>

- Pride Center  
<https://pridecenter.utk.edu/>
- International Teaching Assistant Testing Program  
<https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/ita-testing-program/>
- Thesis and Dissertation Website  
<https://gradschool.utk.edu/academics/graduation/theses-and-dissertations/>
- Library Website for Graduate Students  
<http://www.lib.utk.edu/info/grad/>

Office of Information Technology (OIT) <http://oi7t.utk.edu>



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## APPENDIX K

### Child and Family Studies Doctoral Program

#### Comprehensive Examination Academic Honesty Statement

By signing this document, I affirm that I will not receive help from any other person(s) on the content and writing of this comprehensive exam. I acknowledge that I will have access to various knowledge-based resources, including but not limited to, books, articles, journals, class notes, and the internet; however, the work I submit in this exam will be fully my own. I also confirm that I have reviewed the Child and Family Studies *Graduate Handbook* regarding the procedures of this comprehensive examination and that I will comply with these procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date